



# Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 7/8/2019**  
**Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3**  
**Staff reviewer: Tim Askin & Carlen Hatala**  
**PTS #114777 CCF #190387**

<b>Property</b>	2381 N. TERRACE AV.	North Point North Historic District
<b>Owner/Applicant</b>	At Terrace LLC 1840 N. Farwell Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53202	Korb + Associates Architects 790 N. Milwaukee St. Milwaukee, WI 53202
<b>Proposal</b>	The applicant proposes to construct a new, 3,650 square foot, two-story, single family residence at the above address. This is one of three parcels that were included in the expansion of the North Point North Historic District in 2018. This proposal is for the southernmost parcel. The proposed house is boxy in form and irregular in shape when looking at it in renderings. The core of the house is masonry clad. To the south at grade is a one-story extension clad in wood, and a 12 by 45 one-story wood clad extension is located to the north, cantilevered over the driveway. There will be an attached three-car garage at the rear.	

Features include a flat roof, large expanses of unframed glass with thin muntinless windows in an irregular fenestration pattern, living space cantilevered over the driveway, and exterior decks on first and second stories. Materials consist of dark iron spot brick and vertically and horizontally applied tongue-and-groove wood siding. Landscape features include exterior raised planter beds along the north edge of the driveway, a rear wood deck and a stone patio with fire pit.

The east elevation faces Terrace Avenue and the historic houses directly across the street. The arrangement of the façade is asymmetrical. The entrance is situated at the north end of this façade and is recessed. It features a pivoting front door. The large unframed windows on each story have no muntins or divisions. A slatted screen is positioned in front of one of the windows. There are also two narrow vertical windows, one on each story within the central brick mass that features multiple non-historic bond patterns. An open deck with railing occupies the south corner at the second story. Cladding material is brick and vertical and horizontal wood siding.

The south elevation is two stories at the central brick mass and has a one story extension that runs from the front to the back of the house. The extension is clad in vertical wood siding. It features groupings of narrow vertical windows. At the top of this one-story portion are two open decks, interrupted by enclosed living space. Sliding patio doors access these decks from the center core.

The north elevation features a solid wall of masonry at the first story. The cantilevered living space on the second story is clad in vertically applied wood siding. It features three slender tall vertical windows and one small one. The three car garage is stepped back from the main core of the house. It has a flat roof and is clad with horizontal wood siding. It has a pedestrian door and aluminum and glass garage doors.

The west elevation is mostly taken up by the three-car garage at the first story. This west wall of the garage has no window openings. The main core of the house, visible above the garage, has three thin, vertical windows. The garage appears to have a green roof. Visible to the south is the one story living extension that has large sliding patio doors and an open deck above and a pergola above a grill station.

The roof at the core of the house has a structure that holds a skylight. The structure projects high above the plane of the parapet.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES Raised planter beds frame the north side of the driveway. A rear patio of stone pavers extends westward from the wood deck.

### Staff comments

The design as proposed is at odds with the character, scale, and detail of the North Point North Historic District. While new construction is to be differentiated, it is not to be discordant, needs to be complimentary and support the historic district as a whole. It is to be compatible and add to the harmony and wholeness of the district. New construction should not rupture the historic district's sense of place

Per 320-21-11-g of the Milwaukee Preservation Ordinance, new construction must be "sensitive to the mass and proportions of existing structures on the site or within a historic district." This proposal does not meet the criteria for new construction in the North Point North Historic District. The applicable section of the city's zoning ordinance also states "(a)n objective of these design standards is to ensure that building in residential districts fit within the context in which they are built," (s. 295-505-1a). The fact that the zoning requirements still define required setback by the average of nearest similar buildings makes clear that context is to be regarded broadly (Table 295-505-2 in the zoning code).

### Guidelines

#### SITING AND ZONING

Compliance with the zoning-required setback is unclear. The site plan shows a 30-foot setback, but the precise referent is unknown. Lots are shorter than the rest of the block, but only by eight feet (142 ft vs 150 ft). If the site plan measures to the right-of-way, the setback is likely compliant. If the site plan measures to the curb, it is not compliant, and the setback would need to increase by more than 10 ft. Setbacks must be within 20% of the average of the two nearest residential buildings on the same block face. It does have its main entry facing Terrace Avenue. However, the front entrance is recessed and lacks defining features present in virtually all of the historic properties. Such a recessed entrance is more typical of vernacular construction. The footprint and foundation are highly divergent from each other and therefore inconsistent with the district. There is no visible foundation as is typical throughout the district. The house appears to sit directly on the ground. Attached garages are uncommon in the district and not permitted as additions.

#### SCALE

We are unable to determine the height of the proposed building since no dimensions were provided. Typical house height in the vicinity is 35' - 40'. The shortest house is 2380 N Terrace at roughly 26'. In all cases, this height is achieved by virtue of a pitched roof. The roof of a new building should match existing roofs in pitch, complexity, and orientation. The individual elements of the proposed design are not found elsewhere in the district. They do not relate to one another as in other houses in the district and create disharmony. Here windows are large and wide, some are narrow, all on the same elevation and they do not follow the traditional rhythmic fenestration pattern found throughout the district. An open deck flanks part of the front façade; houses in the historic district may have balconies but they are typically small, ornamental and not conceived as outdoor living space. The scale and design of the cantilevered living space above the driveway is uncharacteristic for this neighborhood. This feature here does not shelter a secondary entrance as in historic properties. All original portes cochères in the district have deep setbacks from the primary façade and subordinate massing to the house. As such, none extend the full-length of the building as this one does.

## FORM

The massing of the house is not found elsewhere in the neighborhood. The relationship of sections that project and recede, the bulk and relationships between height and width need to be consistent with the historic properties. There are no flat-roofed houses in the district but a mix of gabled, hipped, and shallow hip with flat deck, often with dormers and prominent chimneys. The proposed house's projections and recessed elements are modular and do not show a complementary relationship with other homes in the district. The historic properties have raised foundations with clear demarcation of foundation, body, and roof.

## MATERIALS

Brick and wood are traditional materials. However, the brick here is a non-historic color and non-historic bond. Wood siding is found in the district but is applied as horizontal lap siding, or in shingles, as half timbering, or as ornamental wood trim. The use of unpainted vertical tongue-in-groove boards is not characteristic of the district. Some portions of the renderings show a horizontal application of wood siding but it is not the lap siding found on historic properties. Exterior wood slat screening is unknown in the district. Garage doors made of metal and glass would be anomalous in the district. The expansive fields of glass are not found in homes in the North Point North district. From the front elevation, the proportion between fenestration and solid façade is far greater than most of the homes within this neighborhood. The three-part aluminum-clad sash of the windows has no precedent in the district. These are disruptive to the rhythm of buildings across the street, which contain regularly spaced windows that are either double hung or casement. The majority of windows in the vicinity also have multi-lite sashes. The use of large sliding patio doors on any elevation has not been approved by the HPC, even for remodeling projects. Most windows are proposed as aluminum-clad; this has not traditionally been accepted by the Commission for residential new construction.

**Recommendation** Recommend HPC Denial as none of the above criteria were met.

### **Conditions**

### **Previous HPC action**

### **Previous Council action**